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# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

## Progress report on the preparations for the Conference

## Report of the Secretary-General

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1989/91, decided to convene in 1994, under the auspices of the United Nations, an international meeting on population. In resolution 1991/93, the Council decided to call the meeting the International Conference on Population and Development and further defined the objectives and themes of the Conference.

2. The present progress report supplements two previous reports (E/1992/60 and E/1993/49) submitted to the Economic and Social Council by the Secretary-General of the Conference. Those reports were prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/93, in which the Secretary-General of the Conference was requested to report to it at its substantive sessions of 1992, 1993 and 1994 on the progress made in all aspects of the preparatory activities for the Conference.

3. The Council has requested the Conference to address six major groups of issues under the overall theme of population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Preparations for the Conference are demonstrating the growing interest in addressing population and related issues directly as well as the growing recognition of the interrelations between population factors and economic and social concerns.

## I. SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

### A. Organization/meetings

4. In response to General Assembly resolution 47/176, paragraph 8, the Economic and Social Council, at its organizational session in February 1993, reconsidered the timing of the second session of the Preparatory Committee and decided that it should be held from 10 to 21 May 1993 at United Nations Headquarters. Represented at that session were over 150 Governments, a large number of organizations of the United Nations system, several other intergovernmental organizations and several hundred non-governmental organizations. The Committee held 17 meetings (7th to 23rd). The report of the Preparatory Committee on its second session is contained in document E/1993/69.

5. The Council decided, in its resolution 1991/93, paragraph 13, that the second session of the Preparatory Committee should review the state of the preparatory work, including the reports of the six expert group meetings. The Secretary-General of the Conference invited the Committee to decide on the type of documents to be adopted by the Conference and to elaborate further the specific issues to be discussed.

6. In addition, the Secretary-General of the Conference suggested that the final Conference document should contain a set of quantifiable, reachable goals on such issues as maternal, infant and child mortality; life expectancy at birth; education, especially for women and girls; gender equality; and the availability of and access to a full range of modern, safe and effective family planning services.

7. At its 7th, 9th, 10th, 12th and 13th meetings, from 10 to 14 May 1993, the Committee elected the following bureau members: Chairman, Mr. Fred Sai (Ghana); Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Lionel A. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda); Mr. Mauro Couto (Brazil), Mr. Tauno Kääriä (Finland), Mr. Andras Klinger (Hungary), Mrs. Usha Vohra (India), Mr. Abdullah Cholil (Indonesia), Mr. Nicolaas H. Biegman (Netherlands) and Ms. Maymouna Diop (Senegal); Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur, Mr. Jerzy Z. Holzer (Poland); ex officio, Mr. Nabil A. Elaraby (Egypt). This bureau will serve for the remainder of the preparatory process.

## B. Main outcome

8. The Preparatory Committee agreed that the issues and recommendations of the final Conference document should be forward-looking, operational and pragmatic. Recommendations for action should take into account regional diversity and country-specific conditions. Many delegations endorsed the suggestion made by the Secretary-General of the Conference that a new action programme should be free-standing and operational in nature, while building on the important achievements of the 1974 and 1984 population conferences.

9. Many delegations mentioned the new climate of agreement and the will to cooperate in the field of population. They also noted the considerable similarities between the approaches of the developed and the developing regions on substantive matters and the broad consensus on the need to examine population issues in the context of development. Delegations stressed the central importance of the human being in all questions of population and development, and the need for population policies and programmes to be based on the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals and couples.

10. All delegations agreed that population, environment and development were inextricably linked. However, many delegations stressed that the Conference should not become too diffuse in its deliberations, should focus on population-related issues and, wherever appropriate, should build upon existing international agreements.

11. There was unanimous agreement that the empowerment of women was an essential factor in achieving population objectives, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Delegations agreed that existing gender inequalities and barriers to women should be eliminated and women's participation at all levels of policy-making and implementation should be increased. The role and responsibilities of men in bringing about gender equality and attitudinal changes, as well as in child-rearing and family planning, were repeatedly emphasized.

12. The right of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, as stated in the World Population Plan of Action, was reaffirmed by a large majority of the participants in the Preparatory Committee. Family planning services were widely recognized as a means of ensuring reproductive rights and promoting maternal and child health. In addition, it was repeatedly stressed that those services should be voluntary, accessible, acceptable and affordable.

13. Many delegations pointed out the unacceptably high levels of maternal mortality and morbidity in many developing countries which the Conference would need to address. Unsafe abortion, the cause of many maternal deaths each year, was recognized as one of the most neglected problems affecting women's lives in many developing countries. Most delegations recognized that abortion was a major public health issue that should be recognized and addressed by the Conference.

14. There was general support for the proposal of the Secretary-General of the Conference to include a set of quantitative goals in the Cairo document with a proposed time-frame of 20 years. Such goals should take into account existing goals as well as regional and national variations. Qualitative goals and objectives could also be included. Additional resources would be required to achieve those goals. There was agreement that the Conference secretariat should further develop that proposal for the consideration of the Preparatory Committee at its third session.

15. Many delegations also stressed the need for the Cairo document to incorporate adequate provisions for the follow-up to commitments made at the Conference, including mechanisms for the review and appraisal of progress made towards the implementation of Conference objectives.

16. At the 15th meeting, the representative of Colombia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77) introduced and orally revised a draft resolution entitled "Preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development" (E/CONF.84/PC/L.7). At the 23rd meeting, following informal consultations, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee introduced a draft resolution containing a recommendation that the Preparatory Committee for the Conference become a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. The Preparatory Committee then decided to recommend the draft resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council. That draft resolution was later amended and adopted by the Council at its substantive session of 1993 (resolution 1993/76). The General Assembly, at its forty-eighth session, will decide on the proposed change in status of the Preparatory Committee.

## II. THIRD SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE AND FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE CONFERENCE

17. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1993/76, decided to extend the third session of the Preparatory Committee from one to three weeks. It will take place at United Nations Headquarters from 4 to 22 April 1994, following the twenty-seventh session of the Population Commission. The Council, in the same resolution, also decided to convene pre-Conference consultations on 3 and 4 September 1994, at the venue of the Conference.

18. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1993/76, requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to prepare the first draft of the recommendations of the Conference by February 1994. It also requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in collaboration with the Secretary-General of the Conference, to include in the progress report referred to in General Assembly resolution 47/176, paragraph 20, an annotated outline of the

final document of the Conference; the annotated outline is contained in document A/48/430/Add.1.

19. Following upon the six expert group meetings convened as part of the substantive preparations for the Conference, a number of Governments and organizations are organizing ad hoc round-table meetings on specific topics as additional activities preparatory to the Conference. The Conference secretariat has been invited by the organizers to participate in those round tables. To date, five such round-table meetings have been or are being organized: Women's Perspectives on Family Planning, Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights (Ottawa, 26-27 August 1993); Population Policies, Programmes and HIV/AIDS (Berlin, 28 September-1 October 1993); Population and Development Strategies (Bangkok, 17-19 November 1993); Population and Sustainable Development in the post-UNCED Period (Geneva, 24-26 November 1993); and Population and Communication (Vienna, 2-3 December 1993). The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) devoted an entire one-day session of its Twenty-second General Population Conference (Montreal, 24 August-1 September 1993) to reviewing and commenting on the issues that will be on the agenda of the Conference.

## III. UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

20. In addition to the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 19 units, programmes and organizations of the United Nations system have designated focal points for the Conference. The General Assembly, in its resolution 47/176, paragraph 10, encouraged the coordination of activities of the United Nations system for the Conference through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). The ACC Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting for the International Conference on Population and Development held its second session in Geneva on 13 July 1993. Thirteen United Nations entities were represented: the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Environment Programme, UNFPA, the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

21. The Inter-agency Meeting reviewed the status of the preparatory activities for the Conference. Particular attention was paid to the results of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. In addition, the Inter-agency Meeting discussed the contributions of the different units, programmes and organizations of the United Nations system to the preparation of the report on the review and appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action. The Secretary-General of the Conference also invited members of the Inter-agency Meeting to prepare contributions to the proposed action programme that would be adopted by the Conference in 1994. The third meeting of the ACC Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting has been tentatively scheduled to take place during the substantive session of 1994 of the Economic and Social Council.

22. The Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the United Nations organized a meeting of autonomous United Nations research institutes to discuss and coordinate the collective contribution that they could make to the Conference. The meeting, chaired by the Rector of the United Nations University, took place at United Nations Headquarters on 2 October 1992. It was agreed that each institute would prepare a short summary of the findings of its ongoing or recently completed research activities related to the overall theme of the Conference, together with operational recommendations based on those findings. The United Nations University is the focal point for the undertaking, bringing together and synthesizing the inputs of the research institutes in a collective contribution to be transmitted to the Preparatory Committee.

23. In addition to the above arrangements, there is an interdepartmental working group for the Conference composed of representatives of the different departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat. UNDP and UNICEF have each seconded a staff member to the Conference secretariat; in addition, UNICEF is funding a professional post within the Conference secretariat.

## IV. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

24. General Assembly resolution 47/176, paragraph 14, stressed the importance of regional perspectives on population and development and welcomed the convening of population conferences by the United Nations regional commissions and UNFPA. Five regional conferences have been held in preparation for the Conference: the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference (Denpasar, Indonesia, 19-27 August 1992); the Third African Population Conference (Dakar, 7-12 December 1992); the European Population Conference (Geneva, 23-26 March 1993); the Arab Population Conference (Amman, 4-8 April 1993); and the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference on Population and Development (Mexico City, 29 April-4 May 1993). Three of the regional conferences adopted a declaration, one adopted a consensus statement and the other adopted a set of recommendations on population and development. Those documents were made available by the Conference secretariat to the Preparatory Committee at its second session in the languages used by the regional conferences. There were a total of 348 recommendations.

25. A synthesis of the regional conferences is currently being prepared by the Conference secretariat. The report will contain an overview of common concerns and priorities as well as region-specific ones. The Conference secretariat will request the Economic and Social Council, at its 1994 organizational session, to include the synthesis as part of the official documentation for the third session of the Preparatory Committee.

26. As a follow-up to the regional conferences, several subregional conferences have been held or are being organized. Following the Arab Population Conference in April 1993, the Maghreb countries (Algeria, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) held a meeting on population and development in Tunis from 7 to 10 July 1993 to forge a collective strategy on population and related issues. In Port Vila, Vanuatu, the South Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Population and Sustainable Development was held from 6 to 10 September 1993 to discuss subregional population issues and to formulate collective positions on

issues that will be discussed during the remainder of the preparatory process and at the International Conference. In addition, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, in cooperation with UNFPA, will organize a Ministerial Conference on Women and Family Health in Kathmandu from 21 to 23 November 1993, as part of the region's preparation for the Conference.

## V. NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

27. With a view to encouraging maximum national participation in the preparatory process for the Conference, the Secretary-General of the Conference invited all countries to establish national committees on population to serve as focal points for national preparatory activities. To date, more than 100 countries have informed the Conference secretariat of the establishment of such committees. In many cases, committees have taken the form of cross-sectoral, inter-ministerial ad hoc committees. In some cases, a single ministry or other government agency will coordinate the national-level activities for the Conference.

28. The principal activities of the national committees are the preparation of the national report on population and public awareness initiatives, both for the Conference and for population issues in general. The guidelines for the preparation of the national reports were sent to Governments through their Permanent Missions to the United Nations in July 1992. The deadline for submission of reports to the Conference secretariat was 30 September 1993. A synthesis of the national reports will be prepared by the Conference secretariat and presented to the Preparatory Committee at its third session; it will also be made available to the Conference.

29. At their request, 80 countries, including the majority of least developed countries, have received funding for national-level activities through the UNFPA Trust Fund for the Conference. Funding has been used mostly to assist in the preparation of national reports, including the hiring of national consultants and the organization of consultative meetings.

## VI. PARTICIPATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

30. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1993/4, responded to a request from the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/176, paragraph 13, to formulate and adopt modalities to ensure the participation of and contribution to the Conference and its preparatory process of relevant non-governmental organizations, particularly those from the developing countries, taking into account the procedures followed in the preparation for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the experience gained in previous United Nations population conferences. In resolution 1993/4 the Council established criteria for the accreditation of non-governmental organizations and decided that the secretariat of the International Conference on Population and Development would be responsible for the receipt and preliminary evaluation of requests for accreditation.

31. Interest of non-governmental organizations in the Conference and its preparatory process has continued to develop during the past year. At the

second session of the Preparatory Committee, 332 non-governmental organizations sought and received accreditation in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/4. In addition, 69 non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council also participated in the preparatory process for the Conference. Approximately 400 accredited non-governmental organizations were represented at the second session of the Preparatory Committee. Applications for accreditation will continue to be received and assessed by the Conference secretariat until shortly before the third session of the Preparatory Committee. The Secretary-General of the Conference has encouraged Member States to include representatives of national non-governmental organizations in their delegations to the Preparatory Committee and to the Conference itself.

## VII. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

32. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/176, paragraph 18, the Conference secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Secretariat, has endeavoured to ensure the timely circulation of documentation, including reports of regional conferences and expert group meetings, as well as other documentation for the Preparatory Committee.

33. The dissemination of information on the objectives, activities and outcomes of the Conference, through publications and other information activities, will be of major importance to the success of the Conference. The Conference secretariat publishes a newsletter every two months in English, French and Spanish, 20,000 copies of which are distributed world wide. Other information items already developed include a poster, a logo for the Conference, buttons, a video on the second session of the Preparatory Committee, press kits and a brochure.

34. In the initial budget forecast for the Conference, US$ 400,000 has been tentatively proposed for the biennium 1994-1995 for information activities of the Conference. As a consequence of continued budgetary constraints, it has been proposed that this amount be reduced to US$ 200,000. Such a reduction in the regular budget funding will place additional demands on extrabudgetary resources and may result in some curtailment of planned activities. Currently, information activities are funded either by UNFPA or through extrabudgetary contributions.

## VIII. FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS AND STATUS OF FUNDING FOR THE CONFERENCE

35. For the biennium 1992-1993, the General Assembly, in resolution 46/186, approved appropriations for the Conference from the United Nations regular budget totalling US$ 1,485,000. An additional US$ 558,400 for the same biennium was to be sought from extrabudgetary resources. The funds required for further preparations and for the holding of the Conference will be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 and will be considered by the General Assembly in accordance with established procedures.

36. Two trust funds were established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The first, the Trust Fund for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (General Trust Fund), is used to support preparatory activities. A total of US$ 939,769 has been contributed to that Fund by Denmark, France, the Netherlands (through UNFPA), Sweden and the United States of America. In addition, India has contributed locally towards the costs of one of the expert group meetings which was held in Bangalore, India. The second fund, the Voluntary Fund for Supporting Developing Countries' Participation in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, was established to facilitate the participation of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in the preparatory process and the Conference itself. Thus far, Austria, Finland, France, Spain and Sweden have made pledges or contributions totalling US$ 663,080.

37. A UNFPA Trust Fund for the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994, has been established for the purpose of supporting national preparatory activities, including meetings and studies at the country level, public information/awareness-creation, and other conference-related costs. Thus far, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, Thailand, the European Community, UNFPA and UNICEF have contributed or pledged to the Fund a total of US$ 3,124,579.

38. The Secretary-General of the Conference is continuing vigorous fund-raising efforts for the above-mentioned trust funds. Additional contributions are expected to be forthcoming.

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